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Assad is reported willing to press for release of Americans still held

Associated Press

BEIRUT — A senior Lebanese government source said yesterday that "at the right moment" Syria's president would put pressure on the kidnapers of seven Americans in Lebanon to release them.

He said that right now, however, Syria's main effort "is to ensure that the hostages come to no harm."

In another development, a Romanian airline resumed service to Beirut amid Lebanese government predictions that the U.S.-backed boycott of the Beirut airport would fail. It was the first airline flight to Beirut since the hijacking of TWA Flight 847.

Syrian President Hafez Assad said last month that he had not been able to gain the release of the seven Americans, four Frenchmen and a Briton now held in Lebanon. The 12 have been abducted since March 1984.

The government source, who spoke on condition he not be identified, said: "I'm sure that that if Syria put all its weight [on the kidnapers] it could release those individuals." He added, though, that "it might require far more involvement than is proper at the moment."

The source said that when the time

was right, Assad would put enough pressure "to make sure they [the Americans] are released."

Assad was a key figure in securing the release of 39 Americans held hostage in Beirut after Shiite radicals seized a TWA Boeing 727 jet June 14.

The seven Americans are William Buckley, 56, a U.S. Embassy political officer; the Rev. Benjamin Weir, 60, a Presbyterian minister; Peter Kilburn, 60, an American University of Beirut librarian; the Rev. Lawrence Jenco, 50, a Roman Catholic priest; Terry Anderson, 37, the chief Associated Press correspondent in the Middle East; David Jacobsen, 54, director of the American University Hospital in Beirut; and Thomas Sutherland, 53, dean of the American University's School of Agriculture.

Romanian Ambassador Storea Chitu said the resumption of flights was "proof of Lebanese-Romanian friendship." The Romanian carrier Tarom flight carried 55 passengers from Bucharest.

President Reagan launched a campaign July 1 to close down the facility in the wake of the hostage crisis. Britain has endorsed the U.S. moves, but Lebanese officials predicted yesterday that no other countries would adopt the measures.

In a report to President Amin Ge-

mayel, Foreign Ministry Secretary General Faud Turk said the Foreign Ministry doubted "there will be any stand in support of the U.S. measures" when experts from Japan, Britain, Canada, France, Italy, West Germany and the United States meet in Bonn, West Germany, later this week to discuss ways of fighting terrorism, the official National News Agency said.

The report, which detailed steps taken by Lebanon to combat the U.S. boycott, said countries that have already rejected Reagan's call included the Soviet Union, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Turkey, and all eastern European nations.

Lebanon has protested the boycott to the Arab League and United Nations.

Former Lebanese president Suleiman Franjeh urged Gemayel to sign a treaty with the Soviet Union and "sever all diplomatic and economic relations with those who despise the Lebanese people."

In Damascus, Syria, Lebanon's Muslim leaders met to seek a solution to factional conflicts in Lebanon and agreed yesterday that security at the airport should be improved and that all "political organizations and gunmen" should be removed from the area.